

General Access Management

A. General Information

The efficiency and safety of a street or highway depends largely upon the amount and character of interruptions to the movement of traffic. The primary cause of these interruptions is vehicular movements to and from businesses, residences, and other developments along the street or highway. Regulation and overall control of access is necessary to provide efficient and safe highway operation and to utilize the full potential of the highway investment.

The Jurisdictions reserve the right to make exceptions to the criteria where the exercise of sound and reasonable engineering judgment indicates that the literal enforcement of the criteria would cause an undue hardship to any interested party.

B. Access Permit Procedure

An access permit may be required for any public or private access constructed to a public street. The Jurisdictional Engineer will stipulate the information required and the permit form to use. Access to streets or highways under the jurisdiction of the Iowa DOT will be governed by requirements of the Iowa DOT with Jurisdictional review (See [Section 5N-1](#)).

In addition to specific details, the following general criteria will be used by the Jurisdiction when reviewing an access request:

1. Safety to the traveling public
2. Preservation of the traffic-carrying capacity of the highway
3. The impact upon the economy of the area
4. Protection of the rights of the traveling public and of property owners, including the rights of abutting property owners

C. Definitions

Access management definitions can be found in the following resources:

1. Iowa Department of Transportation - "Iowa Primary Road Access Management Policy."
2. Transportation Research Board - "Access Management Manual."

D. Entrance Type

1. **Major:** An entrance developed to carry sporadic or continuous heavy concentrations of traffic. Generally, a major entrance carries in excess of 150 vehicles per hour. An entrance of this type would normally consist of multiple approach lanes and may incorporate a median. Possible examples include racetracks, large industrial plants, shopping centers, subdivisions, or amusement parks.
2. **Commercial/Industrial:** An entrance developed to serve moderate traffic volumes. Generally, a commercial/industrial entrance carries at least 20 vehicles per hour but less than 150 vehicles per hour. An entrance of this type would normally consist of one inbound and one outbound traffic lane. Possible examples include service stations, small businesses, drive-in banks, or light industrial plants.
3. **Residential:** An entrance developed to serve light traffic volumes. Generally, a residential entrance carries less than 20 vehicles per hour. An entrance of this type would not normally accommodate simultaneous inbound and outbound vehicles. Possible examples include single-family residence, farm, or field entrances.

E. Access Management Principles

A variety of access management, location, and design practices and policies can be used to improve the safety and operations of the roadway within a state's, city's, or county's jurisdiction.

Following are the 10 Principles of Access Management identified by the TRB:

1. **Provide a Specialized Roadway System:** Different types of roadways serve different functions. It is important to design and manage roadways according to the primary functions that they are expected to serve.
2. **Limit Direct Access to Major Roadways:** Roadways that serve higher volumes of regional through traffic need more access control to preserve their traffic function. Frequent and direct property access is more compatible with the function of local and collector roadways.
3. **Promote Intersection Hierarchy:** An efficient transportation network provides appropriate transitions from one classification of roadway to another.
4. **Locate Signals to Favor through Movements:** Long uniform spacing of intersections and signals on major roadways enhances the ability to coordinate signals and ensure continuous movement of traffic at the desired speed.
5. **Preserve the Functional Area of Intersections and Interchanges:** The functional area of an intersection or interchange is the area that is critical to its safe and efficient operation. This is the area where motorists are responding to the intersection or interchange, decelerating, and maneuvering into the appropriate lane to stop or complete a turn.
6. **Limit the Number of Conflict Points:** Drivers make more mistakes and are more likely to have collisions when they are presented with the complex driving situations created by numerous conflict points.
7. **Separate Conflict Areas:** Drivers need sufficient time to address one potential set of conflicts before facing another. The necessary spacing between conflict areas increases as travel speed increases, to provide drivers adequate perception and reaction time.

8. **Remove Turning Vehicles from Through-traffic Lanes:** Turning lanes allow drivers to decelerate gradually out of the through lane and wait in a protected area for an opportunity to complete a turn. This reduces the severity and duration of conflict between turning vehicles and through traffic, and improves the safety and efficiency of roadway intersections.
9. **Use Nontraversable Medians to Manage Left Turn Movements:** Medians channel turning movements on major roadways to controlled locations. Nontraversable medians and other techniques that minimize left turns or reduce driver workload can be especially effective in improving roadway safety.
10. **Provide a Supporting Street and Circulation System:** Provide a supporting network of local and collector streets to accommodate development, as well as unified property access and circulation systems.

F. References

American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials. *A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets*. 2004.

Institute of Transportation Engineers. *Transportation and Land Development*. 2002.

Iowa Department of Transportation. *Iowa Primary Road Access Management Policy*. 2012.

Transportation Research Board. *Access Management Manual*. 2003.

Transportation Research Board. *NCHRP Report 420: Impacts of Access Management Techniques*. 1999.

Transportation Research Board. *NCHRP Report 457: Evaluating Intersection Improvements: An Engineering Study Guide*. 2001.

Transportation Research Board. *NCHRP Report 659: Guide for the Geometric Design of Driveways*. 2010.